

How to Use the Decision Trees

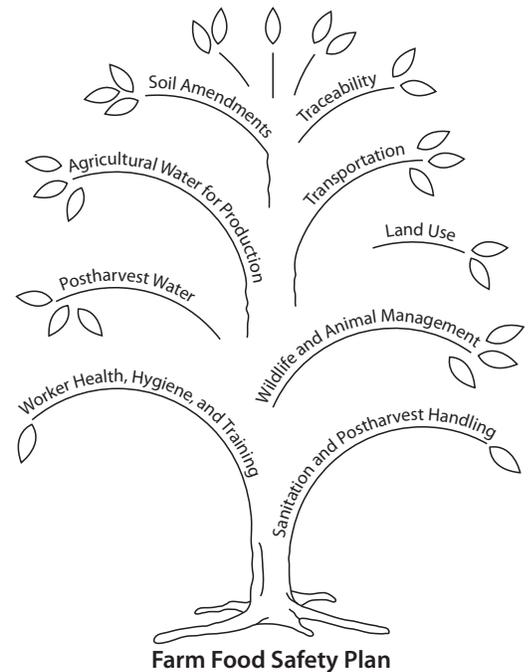
Many growers are overwhelmed with the multitude of farm food safety best practices and recommendations. With limited time, money, and available labor, produce farms must learn how to prioritize which practices to use on their farm to reduce food safety risks as well as achieve business goals. These Decision Trees were created to help you prioritize your farm food safety practices and begin to build your own farm food safety plan.

The purpose of the Decision Trees is to:

- Help you begin to identify food safety risks and practices that reduce risks,
- Help you prioritize implementation of practices to use your resources most efficiently, and;
- Familiarize you with the terminology, tools, and methods you may need to use to meet the requirements and expectations of your customers as well as future regulations for produce.

Each Decision Tree Portfolio includes 5 sections:

1. Overview
2. Decision Tree
3. Sample Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
4. Sample Recordkeeping Logs
5. Template Farm Food Safety Plan Language



Overview—The overview describes the key issues for each decision tree including key risk areas, actions you can take to reduce contamination risks, and other resources that may help you to assess risks.

Decision Trees—All of the Decision Trees follow simple 'YES' or 'NO' pathways to help you assess your practices. Each tree has a series of questions to which you must answer 'YES' or 'NO'. Arrows lead you to the next question with guidance to increase understanding and outline best practices. Continue down the tree as determined by your 'YES' or 'NO' answers until you reach the end.

We suggest reviewing all the trees in this order, but you are free to review the trees in whatever order makes the most sense to you and your farm. The nine trees are:

1. Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training
2. Land Use
3. Soil Amendments
4. Wildlife and Animal Management
5. Agricultural Water for Production
6. Postharvest Water
7. Sanitation and Postharvest Handling
8. Traceability
9. Transportation

Sample Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)—Most trees include samples of SOPs relevant to that tree. An additional document, 'How to Write an SOP', is included in the appendix to guide you through the development of any other SOPs you may need for your farm.

Sample Recordkeeping Logs—Recordkeeping methods are unique to each farm. Use the method and format that makes the most sense for you and your workers. There is no right or wrong method of recordkeeping. Sample Recordkeeping Logs are included to give you ideas - use as they are, or edit to fit your needs.

Template Food Safety Plan Language—Having a farm food safety plan is a good idea for all growers. Even if you only sell at a farmers market once a week, having a farm food safety plan will help guide the implementation of practices on your farm and provide policies for all of your workers to follow. For each decision tree, template language you can edit and adapt for your farm food safety plan is provided.

Glossary—A glossary of terms has been provided at the back of the Decision Tree for your use. Glossary words are highlighted in bold throughout the Decision Trees.